

[Mike Pelletier]

7

Copy - 1 1938-9

Maine

Living Lore

Old Town - 7 Incomplete "Lexicon of Trade Jargon" assignment, and Buxton's interview was mentioned. Wentworth was amused by Buxton's reference to the "horse and buggy days." Mr Wentworth is a familiar figure on Old Town's streets where he amay often be seen sitting primly erect in his buggy while an employee, who drives [him?] to and from the mill, holds the reins.)

"Wentworth says to me, 'How long have you worked here, Mike?"

'Fifty one years, sir,' I says.

'Well, well, ' the reporter says, 'that doesn't look as though they fire people who are over forty five here!' R.G. "I thought I had heard of all the rooms in that mill, but the evaporating room is one I cant' place. What do they do there?" Mike: "Well that is where the water is taken out of the liquor that has been used in the digesters. When that reporter (Buxton) was in there last summer Wentworth asked me to show him some of the water that was removed. I dipped some out in a dipper and handed it to the reporter.

'Why,' he says, 'it looks clear enough to drink. Do you mean to say this water came from that black liquid down there?'

'Yes sir,' I says, 'the water has to [be?] taken out before we can burn what is left.'

Library of Congress

"That liquor is made up in the soda room and pumped to the digesters where it changes the wood chips into pulp. From the digesters the liquor goes to the wash room, then to the evaporating room and back to the soda room where it is used over again. You see it keeps going around and around. During the evaporating process the carbon is burned out of the liquor and the liquid that runs out of there to go back to the soda room looks just like molten lead.

"That work used to be done in the three large rotary burners. (I remember now seeing those burners. The three of them, one next to the other, were individually as large as - or larger than - the boilers of large freight locomotives. They were heated by coal fires underneath, and they were always revolving. The burning liquor appeared inside as a white hot, molten mass. I always thought they were rotary furnaces.)

"Last winter they installed a new type burner that replaced the three old rotarys. That new burner cost a quarter of a million dollars and it saves the company \$5000.00 a week in operating costs. It produces 40,000 pounds of steam in an hour, so you can see there is quite a saving right there. In this new burner the fuel used is the liquor itself and that saves in fuel cost. It is only the carbon in the liquor that burns. The rest of it goes back, as I said, to be used over."

3

[?] will be held in the [?] of P hall. He mentioned some activities he would be engaged in that would prevent him from granting me an interview Saturday or Sunday evening. I think he said he had to attend a [?] meeting Saturday. I told him that the later date would suit me perfectly because I had to write up the interview.

"That's okay, then," he said. "You whip that into shape, and [we'll?] get together again next week."

4

Library of Congress

Mike Pelletier is a remarkably keen minded man and such a rapid talker that it is quite a task to remember all he says. Once he gave me so many figures and dates all at once that I had to ask him to go over them again slowly so that I could get them down. A stenographer would surely be a great help in interviewing him.

5

"Sure he would," said Rioux. "He'd be glad to and you couldn't run across a better man to tell you what you want to know."

"While Mike and I were talking that night he apologized and jumped up to leave the room.

"I'll have to go down and close up that furnace," he said, "or it'll drive us out of the room." He said he used coal in the furnace and oil in a kitchen range.

When he came back from the cellar he said, "My wife asked me who you were. She said she had seen you somewhere, but couldn't exactly place you. I told her she ought to know you - Bob Grady."

I know Albert, one of the boys, and a daughter, Flora, by sight, but to the best of my knowledge I had never seen either Mr. Pelletier or his wife before that night. As I hadn't mentioned my name I wondered if the man had [clairvoyant?] power, and out of curiosity I asked him how he knew my name.

"Know your name?" he replied. "I've known you ever since you were born in that house your father built over on Perkins Avenue. I knew your father, Nick, too. He worked down there in [Great?] Works on the filters. Nick and I and the Hunts - you remember them - were about the only people who live down this way once. Yes indeed, I know you all right."

Mike said he'd be glad to have me call again, but he didn't think he'd have the opportunity to talk until next Monday afternoon (the 30th). He said he'd be working for 6 a.m. to 12 noon that week and would have plenty of time in the afternoon and evenings. Friday

Library of Congress

evening of this week (the 27th) he said he had to attend a reception in honor of his grand daughter who is to marry a chap named Coffin. This Coffin, who also works in the pulp mill, became a Catholic in order to marry the girl. Because of the larger number of guests the

6

[Mrs. Pelletier:??????????] [??] Mike and I played over at the convent at a social Sunday night. That was given for Father [Gullette?]." Mike: "He's a fine man, and well liked here." Mrs. Pelletier: "We played the accordions and there was violin and piano music. There was no dancing." Bill Rioux: "There'd be no room for dancing in a school room." Mike: "Well, they wouldn't have danced, anyway, on Sunday night. There was a few speakers, and after that we had some light refreshments in the shape of cake and coffee." Mrs. Pelletier: "There was some dancing, though, down in [Hampden?] Monday night when we played at that grange meeting. We didn't get home 'till four o'clock in the morning and it was five before we got to bed." Mike: "That dancing was just to keep warm. I played the accordion for about an hour while we were waitin' for the bus to come along and pick us up. There was about 300 grange members down there and I guess the feature of the evening was the clam chowder."

(I mentioned that I had seen Mr. and Mrs. Pelletier's names in the paper after they had played at the Father [Cullette?] social but that I didn't recognize the names at first because "Michael" was spelled "[?].") Mrs. Pelletier: "Mike's name is really 'Mitchell'. I've always spelled my name 'Pelletier,' but he spells his 'Pelky.' It's funny up on the voting lists they have me down as Mrs. Catherine Pelletier and him as Mike Pelky.

7

[?] Tuesday night, but we'll have to use our old accordions. I sent for two new ones to Montgomery, Ward, and Company, but when they got here I found they weren't matched. When we play on those old ones you'd think it wa just one instrument, but I know the minute I touched the keys on those new ones that they were different. keys. The keys,

Library of Congress

are supposed to be stamped on a little [tag?] that goes [on?] top of the accordians, but those didn't have any. However I should think they would have known out there that the two weren't matched. All they had to do was to press down on the fifth key. That gives the key to the accordion. I suppose some [shippin'?] clerk saw they looked alike and [thought?] they were alike, but if you played two like that together it would sound pretty bad. I like a C or a D because they go better with a piano”.

(I reminded Mike that he had promised to play the accordion for my other boy if I brought him over, so he [obligingly?] led the way into the living room and picked up one of the instruments. He played the lively Turkey in the [Straw?] and then he told the boy that he had time to play just one more before it would be time for him to get ready to go to work. “My boy,” he said, “I know you're tired of listenin' to old Mike tell stories, and you'd like to be home playin', so I'll play one you'll be glad to hear—good old [home sweet home ?])

51

(The Life of Mike Pelletier, French-Canadian Paper Maker) (This evening I went over to interview Mike Pelletier. A young fellow named Paul [Cyr?] and Mr. Pelletier's son, Albert, were there paying a visit. I knew both of them. Paul is a quiet fellow - almost everyone is when Albert is around. Mike is youthful and vigorous in spite of his sixty-eight years, and Albert resembles his father. Both of them are interesting and rapid fire talkers, but Albert, with the advantage of youth on his side, did most of the talking. He's not a bore at all and he had such a pleasing and [forceful?] personality that people seem to like to hear him talk.

Bill Rioux was holding a three year old child on his knee when I entered. They told me the child belonged to Robert Cust, a son-in-law of the Pelletiers. The young fellow fell asleep on Bill's lap shortly after I sat down, but whether it was a natural sleep or a trance induced by the fumes of Bill's pipe would be hard to say. The child woke up a little while after his father called to get him, and began to talk about wanting his ball back. As he had no ball with him, they decided that he must have been dreaming about one. If Albert had not been

Library of Congress

there I don't think I would have got nearly so much of the incredible story that was told that night.)

52

Albert: "Hello Bob. I see Jo Martin is not with us any more." (He was referring to a WPA worker who dropped dead today while waiting in a line at the city hall for an allotment of federal food. Martin was fifty years old.) "Did you hear about them closin' up [Bosse?] down here: the fellow that runs the White Cafe? Pretty tough for him, he'd just [slapped?] down \$200.00 for a license to keep open. There was a woman went in there and told [Bosse?] to send her husband home: he was spendin' to much time there. Bosse wouldn't do it, so she says, 'All right, Mr. Bosse, I'll have this closed up.' She went to see a lawyer and the next day Guy [Moors?] (Old Town police chief) went in there with some kind of paper and Bosse had to close his restaurant."

R.G.: "I heard that the government had closed up that moccasin factory." Albert: "They ought to close that place up: it's nothin' but a damned sweatshop." Mrs. Pelletier: "I don't think they closed them up. My girl works there and she worked today." Albert: "They haven't closed them up, but they're goin' to make them pay people while they're learnin' a trade. They made them work there five weeks without a nickle." Paul Cyr: "Yes and they get just as much for those 'A' and 'B' moccasins as they do for the rest. They all go in together." Albert: "Sure they do." R.G.: "What about that old mill? Arthur [Leblanc?] told me I would be surprised if I knew who was going in there." Mike: "All I know is that they auctioned off the machinery and that this fellow Smith, from Massachusetts, has an option on the plant until June. That option cost \$5000.00."

53

R.G.: "[Leblanc?] says that they haven't sold the machinery and that it's going to reopen as a [woolen?] mill." Albert: "You'll never see me back there if they do. I have a steady job now at Great Works and I'm goin' to hang on to it."

Library of Congress

Mrs. Pelletier: "Steady pay down there even if it wasn't so much, would be better than high pay in the woolen mill."

Albert: "Sure it would. I hear some of the big fellows are comin' down there tomorrow, and maybe we'll get back that cut. That would help out."

Mike: "It sure would; [7%?]."

Albert: "In that woolen mill I know how it would be. We'd work for three weeks and then we'd get laid off for three months. No thanks."

R.G.: "Is that Lincoln mill running now?"

Albert: "Yes it is - and, believe me, that is some place to work."

R.G.: "I suppose Wilbur is there yet."

Albert: "Oh yes, Wilbur's there. He's got to stay there now, because they've fired him everywhere else. The first night he worked in the new mill (in Old Town) he had four automatics, with those time clocks on them, to [run?]. The boss looked in about nine o'clock and there was Wilbur runnin around those four [looms?] and the time clocks hadn't moved on any of them. 'Hey, Wilbur,' he says, 'what's the matter with you? Why aren't these looms runnin'?' 'there's nothin' the matter with me,' Henry says, 'It's the damned looms: they wont run.' We went up to Lincoln for a job and the boss says, 'Now boys this is a different type of work from what you've [been?] doin', and I'm not sure you understand it. Do you know anything about double reeds?' 'sure,' Henry says, 'sUR-R-RE.' 'Well,' the boss says, 'What are they?' 'I'll be damned if I know.' Wilbur says. The boss explained the double reeds to us, and we went to work. Those double reeds were two reeds clamped together. The front one was twice as fine as the back one. Six [threads?] came through a reed in the back, 54 but those six went through two in front. If an end broke out you had to press those down to find which of the reeds had only two threads, and you had to put that

Library of Congress

end through one of the reeds in front, [push?] it over and get it through the back one. If a bit of flyins get in there and started to build up on a thread you had to reach down between those reeds. If you didn't know how to do it, it would take you all day to get that out, but those weavers had a special [hook?] for that and they could get those things out in no time.

“That filling is so fine up there that when you fill your shuttles you have fifteen minutes before they run out. If a bobbin is left with much filling on it you have to cut [if?] off. It's so fine it would take you all day to pull it off. Drop a little piece of that yarn and it floats down like a feather. They have a smoking room right [in?] the weave shop and you can go in there and smoke anytime. If you get any grease on your hands you have to wash it right off. When you get your warp out on a loom you go on another one: no cleaning up. Somebody else does that and he spends about three hours on a loom. When he gets done that loom is just the same as when it came from the factory.

“They have automatic [?] takeups on those looms and the first time I got a [?] out I didn't know how to roll down the cloth. I didn't want to spend an hour windin' that down by hand, and I knew Henry Wilbur had worked on [Knowles?] looms, so I went over to him and asked him how to work that gear. ‘Henry,’ I says, ‘how in the devil do [you?] get that cloth wound down?’ ‘damned if I know,’ Henry says. I went back to that loom and started to fool around with that take-up and I noticed a little lever folded into a slot on the side of a gear. I pulled that lever out and whir-r-r! that cloth wound up in a second. After that I run across anything I didn't understand I didn't waste any time askin' Henry Wilbur about it.

55

“When I got through there they were runnin' just three days a week, and to hold the crew they made them work every other week. I got a double and twist end through a wrong reed and the boss says, ‘Albert, I've got to lay you off for a week.’ He said he was sorry but he'd got orders to lay off weavers for a while when they made mistakes so they'd learn to be careful. I asked him if I could get my pay and he says, ‘No: you aren't fired - you're just laid

Library of Congress

off for a week.' 'Well,' I says, 'if you lay me off, you might just as well fire me.' He told me that any time I wanted to come back the job was good.

"I saw old man Morton the other day. He was tellin' me how near he [come?] to gettin' a job in Lincoln once. An old friend of his got a job up there as the boss weaver, and Morton [telephoned?] to him for a job. The boss telephoned back, 'sure, sur, but I'll have some one else to make a place for you. Come up in a week.' Instead of goin' up in a week, Morton waits two weeks. He went up there and went in the mill and he saw a big fellow strut in' around the weave shop and he went up to him and says, 'Mister, can you tell me where the boss is?' 'sure,' the big fellow says, tappin' himself on the chest. 'I'm the boss.' 'Why,' Dave says, 'I thought a fellow named Randall was the boss here!' 'Well, he was last week,' the big fellow says, 'but they fired him.' If Dave had gone up when Randall told him to, he would have got a job, of course. He said it was the [nearest?] he ever [come?] to gettin' a job without [connectin?].' Old Dave doesn't have to worry, though he's pretty well fixed. He just bought a new house up here.

"Say, if you're writin' something you ought to say somethin' about [those?] eagles they saw out at [Pushaw?] Pond this winter. '[Humpy?]' Moore was out there fishin' through the ice with a couple of other fellows, and they saw those three eagles flyin' around. There was one big one and two small ones. '[Humpy?]' says they sailed around up there for two hours without flappin' a wing.

56

"I was listenin' to a radio program last week advertisin' [?] [cigaretts?]. The name of that program was Don't You Believe It. That [announcer?] told about a lot of things that people believe that aren't true. He wouldn't name the town, but he said there was a place up here in Maine where people thought the devil had left [tracks across a ledge of rock?]. 'don't you believe it,' he says, 'the devil never left tracks anywhere. These marks were made by the [action?] of the water washin' against the ledge."

[?]: "Why, that's the story you told me, Mike, a couple of weeks ago, about the tracks of the devil left in that ledge down below [Wing's?] Mill." [Mike?]: "Those [?] weren't made by the river [?] it never come up that high. They [were the prints of feet in the ledge.?] I've seen them myself. There was a dog's tracks right alongside of them. But how do you suppose that story ever got on the radio?"

Albert: [?], that is funny-[?] right after you told Bob about it. I suppose, though, other people besides us know about that. That program come from a New York station. That same night he mentioned that gravestones down in [Bucksport?] where a woman's leg is supposed to appear on the [stone?]. He didn't say '[Bucksport?],' he said 'somewhere is Maine.' That was another of his 'don't you believe its. He said there was no [?] about that: it was just caused by a fault in the rock. A friend of mine told me he saw two perfect rabbits [?] on a gravestone. They painted them out, but they kept comin' back. They were caused by a fault in the stone. He told me about another stone he saw that had a woman with a [?] on it."

[Robert Cast?] came in about here to get his child, and in discussing the closing of the White Cafe, [Cast?] said that the trouble started when [Bosse?] attached the wagon of the husband of the woman who [took?] action against him.) Albert: "Oh, no, no. You're wrong there. You can't attach any body's wagon unless he got more than [twnty?] dollars a week, and that fellow doesn't?]."

57

[Cast?]: "Well, maybe he was goin' to have the fellow juggled for not payin' him. Do you know you can have anybody put in jail for the debt of a dollar if you want to pay the state a dollar for the fellow's board. Say, they came near puttin' my brother in jail for a debt he didn't really owe. He was managing a basketball team up here, and the boys wanted suits. There were eight of them and they went down to [Bangor?], and [Kenny?] went with them. (Kenneth Cast, his brother) The boys each had five dollars to pay on their suits, but [Dakin?] (of the [Dakin?] Sporting Goods Company) didn't want to open eight

Library of Congress

accounts. He thought those young fellows might not pay him, and he knew it would be easier to collect one account than eight. Those suits cost \$17.00 apiece. They had the regular pants, blouse, and sweat shirt. Kenny let them put the account in his name, but of course he wasn't gettin' any suit. Those fellows never paid [Dakin?] a cent. Kenny was workin' up here in the woolen mill and one day Pelletier (a policeman) and Guy [?] came in with a paper. Pelletier asked Kenny if he'd like to go to jail for a while. My brother went to a lawyer about it and the lawyer says, "Cast, you've got yourself in a jam, all right, and there's only one way you [?] get out of it besides payin' this bill: by takin' the pauper's oath. Do you know what that is?" Kenny said he didn't have a penny and no prospects of ever gettin' one. No says, 'You're word will be no good anywhere, you can never get trusted agian."

Mike: "He'd be a sort of an outcast." Cast: "That's the idea. That bill wasn't big enough to go through bankruptcy for, and of course Kenny didn't want to take any pauper's oath. He had to pay it. He had to pay for all those basketball suits or go to jail. He took that receipt and went around to see those fellows. He says to Applebee, 'Look here, Bud: I've paid for the basketball suit of yours, and if you don't want to pay me for it, give me the suit.' 'the heck,' Applebee says, 'I've sold that suit.' 'Okay,' Kenny says, 'give me the money then,' 'Hell,' Applebee says, 'I aint got any money.' 'Well,' Kenny says, 'you better get some pretty soon. You fellows

(I mentioned that similiarity of the names of the old Indian game 'spin the [Pan?]' and the one [spoken?] of by Mike, "Spin the [?]," and how Henry Mitchell said how one of the [forfeits was "[?] ten yards of ribbon. "Yes", said Mike, "and they need to pay that forfeit here, too. Sometimes it was 'twenty-five yards of ribbon' and they'd have to kiss each other every time they measured a yard."

The George Gardner mentioned in connection with maple sugar is the local postmaster. He has been prominent in politics here,, as a democrat, for a long time. He used to run a store where trunks, suitcases, horse blankets, harness, etc., was sold. One of his boys

Library of Congress

runs his harness and leather goods repair shop now. George was the tax collector for a long time. He is French, and always signs his name 'des jardins.')

Mike: "Gardner has about [400?] trees out there. He sells a lot of maple syrup every year, but I couldn't say just how much he gets from those trees. He doesn't make any sugar to sell, but I guess he makes a little for his own use. He has a sugar house out there, though, and there's no doubt he could make plenty of it if he wanted to, but he gets more sellin' the syrup. Louis [Marcier?] - and he lives out in French settlement - done some sugar makin', and his father did before him. I can't tell you much about his business, but I know he used to sell maple sugar around here in little birch bark containers. [Marcier?] has about [500?] trees out there, but Gardner or Marcier could tell you a lot more about what they do than I could.

"Then there's the 'Gold Mine Road' out between Milford and Greenville. It comes out on the county road. That got its name because some people found gold there. Not very much, but they were nuggets and gold sure enough. Baker Brook, out on the Greenville road, was named for a fellow named Baker that used to lumber a lot out that way. Otter Stream, on the Bradley road, was called that because a long time ago there used to be otters there. An otter is something like a seal. There's only one stream there but you cross it three times goin' along that road, and they call them 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Streams. They're all the same one.

"A lot of birch grew along Birch Stream up near Pea Cove. How [Sunhase?] Stream, out beyond Milford, got its name I don't know. They have a story that a fellow named Hayes was drowned there a long time ago and an Indian brought some whites up to show them where the place was, and he pointed to the water and said, 'sunk Hayes.' Of course you can't tell how much truth there is in stories like that. Maybe it's an Indian name. There's the Jo Pease Rips between Milford and Indian Island, and the 'Cook' (another rips) between Indian Island and Old Town. That 'Cook' was named for a fellow named Cook who used to tote wangan stuff up that way to the booms and drives. How they came to name one

Library of Congress

of those booms 'Nebraska' I don't know. It must be an Indian name. (I pointed out to Mike that the word 'Nebraska' didn't sound like a local Indian name, and he agreed with that. Personally I think it was called that by river men, in a [facetious?] mood, to signify a place far away.) "Nebraska is on the upper end of the island, and the Argyle boom was on the lower end. There's no doubt that state out west has an Indian name."

41

[Mike: "I don't think they'd allow a powder mill right in the city. The best place for one of those is out in the country. Out Greenville way would be a lot better. I don't know anything at all about airplanes, and whether that would be a good place or not for an airplane factory, I couldn't say. You can tell them, though, I said the people in this town don't care what kind of business starts up there as long as something does start:"]

"None of my children learned to play the accordion except [Bernice?]. She could play a few pieces on it. The girls all learned to play the piano, though. Clara, Bernice, and Alberta.

"That French Settlement is two miles west of Old Town. There's just a few farms there and a small school. That was called French Settlement because just French lived there. The Merciers, Paradis, Cotes, Martins, and so forth. They broke the ground and made that little settlement a good many years ago. Hogtown, out back of Stillwater, is another little place. A woman that used to live out there used to raise a lot of pigs, and they've called the place 'Hogtown' ever since.

"Do you know how they come to call that lower end of Great [Works?]' 'Picketville?' Some people think it must have been because some one named Picket must have lived there, but that's not the case. It's because a lot of the old houses down there were built with pickets instead of havin' boards nailed to the studdin'. You know - ordinary pickets like they use in fences about three inches wide and one inch thick. Of course they were square on the end instead of pointed, and they broke the joints when they nailed them on.

"Say, I thought of somethin' since the last time you were here. I guess it would come under the head of superstitions. When I was a kid they used to have treasure [seekers?] here. The story got around that there was treasure buried somewhere along the river, and people used to pick out likely places to dig for it. There was a medium over in Bradley, [here?], and some fellows got the idea that she might help them. They went over to see her and she went into a trance and finally described some place where she said there was some treasure buried. Those fellows found what they thought was the place and started to dig. Finally they unearthed a [pail?] with a metal cover, but when they got the cover off all there was in the pail was something that looked like a lot of leaves. They were pretty sore and they threw the pail away and went back and told the medium about what happened. 'You fools,' she says, 'one of you broke the spell. You had the treasure in your hands, and you threw it away!' According to the story if any one spoke before they got the treasure in their hands, it turned out to be worthless, and that's what the medium [meant when she?] told them that one of them broke the spell.

"Those stories were all about the same pattern. I've heard a lot of them. Some men went down the river a ways to the tide water and started to dig there. They came to a chest and one of the men shouted, 'WE've GOT IT!' That, of course, broke the spell, and they found the chest was empty. Pretty near the same story was told about a party that dug up here near Eva's Point, opposite Indian Island." Bill Rioux: "I remember hearin' about that. It happened about seventy years ago." Mike: "I guess nobody'll ever dig up any treasure around here, but there must be a lot of stuff buried here just the same."

63

Well sir, that fellow described my grandmother just as well as I could do it myself. Then he says, 'Your wife is a very neat and careful housekeeper, but you did something tonight that didn't look very good.' 'Good night,' I says to myself, 'he's goin' to tell about those dishes.' And that was just what he did. He called Elise up then and told her she had had a lot of sickness. He told me to quit worryin' about gettin' my house finished, and to not spend any

Library of Congress

money on it because I could get the work done for nothing. I thought there wasn't much danger of my spendin' any money fixin' up my house because I didn't have any money to spend. A few days later a fellow came over and told me he had a little building stuff I could have and that he'd come over and help me put it on. I got that work done and it didn't cost me anything.

"He told Neil Fox he was goin' to get into some trouble with two other boys, but that he'd get out of it all right. Well, of course we know Neil did get into that trouble and the other two fellows went to jail, but Neil got off because they couldn't pin anything on him. That fellow's name was Strout, and he came from Portland."

R.G. "Where were those meetings held?" Albert: "Oh come now! I won't tell you that. He ran away with Gray's wife." R.G.: "I mean were they held in a hall or in a private dwelling. Albert: "Always in private homes. I can't tell you that fellow's first name; but he had just [??????] [???]."

64

R.G.: "Say, do you fix [motors?]? I have one over to the house that wont run. It belongs on a washing machine." Albert: "Fetch it over and I'll look at it. They bring me all kinds of stuff to fix. Old Charlie [Hutchinson?] had a chime clock that he wanted fixed. 'Albert,' he says, 'that's a fine clock and I hate so see it standin' idle, but if I take it uptown they'll want more than it's worth to tinker with it.' I like to fool with clocks and I told Charlie that I'd take the clock home and fix it and he could pay me whatever it was worth to him." (Albert told us here something about clocks in general and about how Charlie's chime clock differed from ordinary ones. He told us that the trouble was and how he fixed it, but it was all too technical for me to remember.) "When Charlie came up to get it a week later the four o'clock woolen mill whistle was just blowin'. That clock was setting on the mantlepiece and the hands pointed to just four. 'Charlie,' I says, 'you see that clock? It hasn't lost a minute since it was fixed.' Charlie says that clock is running fine now.

Library of Congress

"[Adalphi Leblanc?] - you know the fellow that goes around selling things - come up to the house once with a bag in his hand and he says, 'Albert, I've got a clock here that the kid took apart. If you can put life into that I'll say you're [good?].' I looked into that bag, and [saw?] it was just a collection of springs, wheels, and screws. 'I'll bet you a dollar you can't [put?] that together [so?] it'll run,' he says. 'Is everything here?' I says, 'I'll guarantee all the parts are there,' he says. I put that clock together and everything was there but one of the wheels and a few screws, but I happened to have an old clock that had just the parts I needed. The next time he called the clock was running."

Mike: "That reminds me of the experience of a fellow that took a clock apart to clean it. He put it together again [so?] it would run, but he had a handful of gears that he hadn't found any place for in the clock."

Albert: "I fixed one clock for a fellow that he had been tryin' to fix himself. There were some long screws in there that he had lost the nuts for, and he had bent over the ends of these screws as they'd stay in. Now there was no need of doin' that; it would have been much better to have just pushed the screws in and left hem like that. The trouble with one clock that a fellow brought me was that it kept stoppin' at twenty minutes of eight. He thought the hands were sticking, and he had twisted them all kinds of ways." (Albert gave me some more technical details here, but I couldn't remember them. The trouble was, he said, that a hen's feather had gotten into that clock and got wedged somewhere so that the clock would stop at [7:40?]. The hands could be turned by, but the spring wasn't strong enough to run the wheels by the feather. He said he noticed the feather as soon as he opened the clock, and that all he did was to take a pair of long [?] pliers and pull the feather out. "The fellow thought my fixin' that clock was something of a miracle," Albert said, "but I never told him what the matter was with it."

Mike: "That was pretty near as bad as [?] trouble that I saw Johnny [Raines?] fix once. (Raines ran a jewelry repair shop here about forty five years ago.) I was up there in his shop and a woodsman came in with a watch that had stopped on him. It was one of those

Library of Congress

old fashioned key wind watches with two covers on the back. You had to open both covers to wind the watch. I have one in my pocket, right now that I've had for fifty years. Johnny opened that watch and screwed a glass into his eye and started pokin' at the works. By and by he let the woodsman take his glass [so?] he could see what the matter was. 'Come over here, Mike,' Johnny says, 'I want you to see this too.' I took that glass of his and looked in at the hairspring and there was a dead [louse wedged?] in there. I suppose the woodsman opened the watch to wind it and that [louse?] got in there and got caught. Say, with Johnny's glass that [louse?] [looked?] to be inches long."

Albert: "That's something like the one about the fellow that took his watch in to a jeweler to find out why it stopped, and the jeweler found a dead bug in the works, 'Look here,' he [said?] to the fellow, 'no wonder this watch wont [run?]; the engineer is dead!'